

VAT was the week!



... When Clare wore her heart on her sleeve for The Chancellor ...

THERE just wasn't enough room on Clare Francis' sleeve to wear this giant heart, probably the most expensive Valentine sent or received this February 14.

For this was the Charities VAT Reform Group's Valentine message to Sir Geoffrey Howe, a £7 million love heart representing the leading charities' annual VAT bill.

Although most of her famous sailing expeditions have been single-handed, Clare was accom-

panied on her voyage to 11 Downing Street by John Hannam, MP, who has leant strong support to the campaign for VAT relief in Parliament, and Tim Yeo, Director of The Spastics Society.

Bearing the inviting message: "How about it, Sir Geoffrey?" the huge heart-shaped card was received by a member of staff at No 11.

Clare and her escorts had to wait for Budget Day to see if the Chancellor was moved by their romantic appeal!

Spastics News Title Competition

WE would like to thank all those readers who took part in the competition to rename Spastics News. We received hundreds of entries suggesting a wide variety of new and original names. The Executive Council of the Society will be meeting this month and will decide on the winning entry.

The results will be announced in next month's Spastics News.

Apology

We regret that, due to a misunderstanding in last month's issue, the Sheerness Spastics Society Shop was mistakenly described as the Chatham shop. We apologise to the staff and customers at Sheerness.

HRH The Duchess of Kent visits Neath Hill Professional Workshop



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The Director's Column

AT this time of year, thoughts inevitably turn towards the Budget, due to be unveiled by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on March 15.

Despite a natural interest in financial matters, I feel that even the simplified journalistic presentations of the Budget arithmetic are often hard to follow.

They seldom show, in straightforward terms, the basic figures for total Government expenditure, and the categories of revenue from which such expenditure is financed—still less do they distinguish closely between capital and revenue spending.

Helpful

As far as individuals are concerned, newspapers carry tables, no doubt trying to be helpful, showing the effects of income tax changes on households composed of varying numbers and with differing income levels. Somehow the criteria never seems to fit one's own situation precisely.

But what about this year's Budget. We hear a lot nowadays about the elimination of the supposed consensus which used to exist in the 50s and 60s between the two major political parties. It is said that there is a polarisation of politics with Conservative and Labour moving more towards extreme policies. Yet the options which are apparently seriously considered at

Budget time rather belie this. Indeed, there seems to be remarkably few truly radical proposals for budgetary changes coming from either side.

I believe that it is time to think about some bigger changes than usual. Perhaps we could learn a lesson from gin. A couple of hundred years ago, the duty on gin was an insignificant part of its total price with the result that large numbers of relatively poor people did themselves a lot of damage by drinking too much gin.

Consequence

Today, the duty on a bottle of gin is a relatively high proportion of the price and the consequence is that a smaller number of people, rich and poor alike, do themselves considerable damage by drinking too much of the stuff.

Now, consider the case of tobacco. It is likely that the Budget will see a modest increase in the duty on cigarettes—perhaps 5p on a packet of 20, making a total duty of 84 pence per packet. I would like to see the duty on cigarettes raised by £10 a packet instead!

The standard arguments against substantial increases in duty on cigarettes are two-fold. Firstly, there is the claim that the Treasury would lose a very important source of revenue. This may be true.

However, the reduction in lung cancer and the decrease in the number of

handicapped babies born, to mention but two of the beneficial consequences of a dramatic reduction in smoking, would lead in the medium term to enormous financial savings in central Government expenditure through reduced demand for hospital beds and social services generally.

There does not appear to be any serious consideration of these kinds of financial savings. Perhaps this is partly because the Treasury is concerned with raising revenue which would fall, while the savings would accrue to the Department of Health. I believe that a hard and careful look at the financial implications of introducing a penal tax on cigarettes would produce fascinating conclusions.

But what of the moral case? Given the overwhelming body of medical evidence which now exists demonstrating that there are far-reaching harmful consequences from the consumption of cigarettes, how can the Government possibly justify deriving such a substantial part of its revenue from such a source? It's as though the Government depended for its revenue on maintaining or increasing the number of road accidents. I wonder what would be the response if it was announced in the Budget that the Government was to set up a large number of State-administered brothels as an important source of revenue.

I did mention that there were two grounds on

which substantially higher duty on cigarettes might be resisted and the second is, of course, a more legitimate concern with the future of employees in the tobacco industry. There is no doubt that their interests should be properly protected from any overnight collapse in the market for cigarettes.

It is my view, however, that within the cost benefit equation there would be sufficient resources available to ensure that, at least from a financial point of view, the interests of workers in the tobacco industry would be adequately safeguarded.

Radical

I have mentioned one radical option for the Budget strategy, and there are many others of interest to disabled people and their families. The idea of a comprehensive disability cost and income scheme has been submitted by the Society to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and in its way this also constitutes a radical response to the present unnecessarily complex and often inadequate system of disability benefits.

I hope that serious consideration will be given to this and other fundamental changes in Budget strategy. The starting point for the debate must be the question of whether the relevant client groups are properly served by the proposals rather than whether such changes are administratively convenient.

77 Ayes— but a "noe" to the Bill

DONALD Stewart, MP, failed to get a Second Reading for his Private Members Bill, *Disability (Prohibition of Unjustifiable Discrimination)*, on Friday, February 11. Despite a relatively good attendance at the debate, not enough MPs were prepared to vote for the motion; 100 ayes votes are needed, but only 77 were given.

Many MPs made the point that the Bill should receive a Second Reading and progress to Committee Stage to allow further discussion on this important issue. Its failure to do this means that another opportunity to consider anti-discrimination legislation will not present itself during the Parliamentary Session.

Legislation would not alienate public

During the 4½-hour debate many different points of view emerged. Jack Ashley, one of the leading proponents of anti-discrimination legislation, made a strong case for the Bill; he did not agree that legislation would alienate the general public.

Alex Lyon, MP, pointed out that the same arguments were used against the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. He felt that these Acts "had been a good deal more effective in getting rights for blacks and for women than anything that could have been done by education alone."

Others took the view that legislation should go hand in hand with education, and that both were essential.

Opposition to the Bill was led by the Minister for the Disabled, Hugh Rossi, MP. He resisted attempts by the opposition to give an official "thumbs down" to the Bill.

Insufficient evidence

He took the view that there is insufficient evidence to justify sweeping legislation. Hugh Rossi said that, in his experience, when disabled people are discriminated against this is often the result of ignorance about their needs and abilities. He felt that the positive solution to these problems was a greater promotion of integration. That is the key to Government policy.

The Spastics Society is grateful to Donald Stewart for providing this opportunity to discuss the issue of discrimination. During the debate many problems were identified and various questions raised.

The Society's Working Group will be considering these and many international issues.

Society calls for new Disability Costs and Income Scheme in pre-Budget submission

AT the end of February, The Spastics Society presented a pre-Budget submission to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe. The submission calls for the introduction of a new Comprehensive Disability Costs and Income Scheme and an improved system of Maternity Benefits.

The concept of a comprehensive Disability and Income Scheme, aimed at providing disabled people with an adequate income and enabling them to live independent and dignified lives, has been endorsed by all political parties. To date, however, such a scheme has not been introduced. The major reason for this appears to be the prevailing economic system.

However, the proposals made in the Society's submission were formulated with the existing economic situation in mind and are, it is believed, capable of immediate implementation. Nor is it considered that it would be necessary to await any general economic recovery.

In constructing the Comprehensive Disability Costs and Income Scheme, the Society attempted to overcome the current complexity of piecemeal benefits available to disabled people, and to pro-

vide a partial incapacity element, which would give recipients the opportunity to work part-time if they wish.

The proposed scheme consists of two main parts, a Costs Allowance and a Disability Income.

Components

The costs Allowance involves several components related to the extra costs and needs which arise from ill health and disability. This includes provision for the extra, often hidden, costs of everyday living, with special allowances such as Mobility and Attendance Allowance as well as heating, diet, laundry and domestic help additions.

These allowances would be paid irrespective of earnings or National Insurance contributions; they would not be means tested and would be tax free. Cause of disability would be irrelevant and the allowances payable to, or for, anyone who has suffered from a mental or physical disability or illness for six months or more, and who has no early prospect of recovery.

The second part of the scheme, The Disability Income, would be payable to sick or disabled people of working age (16-64) who

are unable to work a full week. The rate would be based on a percentage of national earnings; again, this would be paid regardless of contribution records, but would be subject to income tax and National Insurance deductions. Individual amounts would vary according to the number of hours per week that a person is willing and able to work.

In addition to the above proposals, the submission recommends the introduction of a Carer's Benefit. As a first step towards this the present Invalid Care Allowance would be extended to all married and cohabiting women who are caring full-time for a sick or disabled person. The benefit would be non-contributory, would not be means tested and would be free of tax liability.

Restored

The Spastics Society has also recommended that the Maternity Grant—currently £25—should be restored to its 1949 level, that is, increased to £120. This would be paid in three instalments and linked to ante-natal clinics.

A further recommendation is the extension of Child Benefit payments to the 28th week of pregnancy. In addition it is

suggested that, for those who are entitled to Supplementary Benefit, pregnant women should automatically be awarded the £3.35 per week diet addition, whilst those with a baby under the age of six months, should be awarded the £4.65 rate heating addition.

The proposals put forward in this submission were produced against a background of criticisms of, and dissatisfaction with, the complexity of currently available benefits—created as a result of piecemeal attempts to meet specific needs.

Proposals

As has already been indicated, the submission advocates that all these benefit proposals should be purely non-contributory.

Next month, *Spastics News* will include "The Contribution Myth" by Linda Avery, Research Worker for the Society, which explains why the operation of the National Insurance contribution system is considered an inappropriate method of allocating benefits. This will be the first of several articles considering the background to, and detailing, the Society's proposals to the Chancellor.

Spastics Society Group to examine international anti-discrimination law

BECAUSE of gathering momentum in the debate about anti-discrimination legislation in favour of disabled people, which has arisen from the CORAD (Committee on Restrictions Against Disabled People) report, and Donald Stewart, MP's Private Members Bill, the Society has decided to sponsor a project seeking to gain more information to help in formulating policy on this matter.

Consideration

This project, under a Working Group chaired by Ron Gerver, is starting with a survey and analysis of such legislation in other countries as a prelude to closer consideration of the situation in the UK.

Letters have been sent to some 70 organisations around the world concerned with disabled people. It is hoped that this will yield useful new information which can be put together in the next few months, but Ron Gerver and his assistant,

Hilary Leslie (based at Park Crescent), are also extremely keen to hear from readers of *Spastics News* who may have experience of such legislation and/or who may have views on the desirability or otherwise of anti-discrimination legislation.

Ron Gerver

Ron Gerver is convener of The Spastics Society Consumer Group and a member of the Educational Advisory Committee. He holds degrees from Reading, Oxford, Freiburg and Bonn Universities, and has a post-graduate Diploma in Law. Ron lives and works in London as a free-lance legal translator.

Hilary Leslie

Hilary Leslie, who joined the Society to work with the project in January, has a degree in French and Spanish. From a Civil Service background, Hilary is experienced particularly in committee work and work involving Parliamentary legislation.

LETTERS

Help to compile a 'warts and all' history

A HISTORY of The Spastics Society "warts and all" — this is the fascinating writing job I am working on and where the readers of Spastics News could be most helpful.

To make it lively and not a dull school text book, I need your readers' memories. Incidents, characters, achievements; heroic, funny, sad; this is the stuff of a reasonable book.

Grown

The Society has grown from a handful of people to some ten thousand, from a Fiver to £23 million pounds a year in income, and from half a dozen centres for children and adults to more than seventy, in thirty years. This is the achievement of enterprising people and there must be many stories that need to be told.

Memorable

Please, I would be grateful to chairmen or secretaries of groups for short histories of their groups and centres, names of first chairmen, patrons, size of group, newspaper cuttings (photostats), memorable people and incidents, and photos. Please send them to me care of The Editor, Spastics News.

IAN DAWSON-SHEPHERD.



JOE is pictured with Miss M. Morgan.

Society loses friend

BORN the eldest of seven children to deaf and dumb parents over 40 years ago, in one of Belfast's poorest and most troubled areas, Joe Hughes was severely Cerebral Palsied, wheelchair bound and largely unable to speak.

Between the ages of eight and 14 he lived in mental health institutions although he was of above average intelligence. Joe was not able to read and write and could not communicate in any conventional way.

Despite this Joe was to become one of Northern Ireland's most prominent citizens, and a champion fund raiser.

In 1965 Joe joined a youth club who, by fund raising "bob-a-job" style, paid for him to make a journey to Lourdes. In 1968 he returned there, but this time, he had raised all the funds himself, by running a mail order agency.

Bitten by the bug, Joe began to fundraise for others, joining the Northern Ireland Disabled Drivers Association in 1969 and later serving on the committee.

In one year he raised £3,000 for Oxfam by pushing himself with one foot in two sponsored wheelchair pushes. The money went to help handicapped children in Bombay.

Holiday for Belfast children

Joe's efforts also paid for underprivileged children in Belfast to have holidays. He was a member of the Irish Wheelchair Association and The Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development.

1976 was a busy year for Joe; he won a Special Achievement Award from The Spastics Society as well as visiting Montreal for the Olympic Games.

Since 1980 Joe has helped to boost the proceeds of the annual Fitzroy Fair by wheelchair pushes, raising nearly £6,000 in all. He and his contribution to the event will be greatly missed.

He died suddenly earlier this year.

In nominating Joe for the 1976 Achievement Awards, Raymond King (Chairman of The Central Committee for the Handicapped of the Northern Ireland Council for Social Services) said of Joe that his difficulties in life were balanced "by the qualities of the human spirit which Joe possesses in abundance; courage, faith, determination, hope, endeavour and love."

CURTAIN UP ON LITERARY CONTEST

GET your pens and pencils ready — dust the type-writer or start persuading someone to give you a hand because here we go go again with our annual smash hit — The Spastics Society's Literary Contest, open to people of all ages, with any type of handicap.

Judges

A new contest, some new judges (we'll be telling you more about them later) and that very important day when the lucky winners in each section will attend a celebration lunch at the Society's Family Services Centre in Fitzroy Square, London, followed by a reception where they will meet the judges and get their prizes. This will be Thursday, October 20.

Once again Lady Wilson has kindly agreed to judge the poetry and we are very grateful to her for her continued help and interest. We have also been fortunate enough to persuade the well-known Literary Agent George Greenfield to once again judge a section of the contest — his professional expertise and friendly interest in the contestants were greatly appreciated last year.

Prizes

There are cash prizes (from £15-£50) for the best entries in several categories — young people up to the age of 16, a section for adults under two headings — Fiction and Articles of General Interest and, of course, poetry, which covers all ages. You can send in as many entries as you wish, under any appropriate headings.

In past years we've had entries from five-year-olds right through to senior citizens and we have had everything from a three-line verse to a four-act play, from childhood memories of life in a Welsh mountain village to an interview with a profes-

sional wrestler, from way-out science fiction to a deeply thought-out article on philosophy. One of the funniest entries was a blow-by-blow account of a visit to a dentist — and if you can see the funny side of that, you're more than just a writer — you are a hero!

Don't be discouraged if you haven't had any luck with entries in previous contests. One man sent in articles for five years without any luck, then, bingo — he went on to get first prize on two separate occasions, and later, a second prize, so here's your chance.

Your chance

Entries are welcome from now onwards, and closing date is August 1, 1983. Entry forms and full details can be obtained from Mrs Nina Heycock, Chenil House, 181-183 King's Road, Chelsea, London SW3, who is organising the contest for The Spastics Society.

Literary Enthusiast Dies

SADLY we report the death at Matfen Hall on January 1 of Tom Gair.

Born in Northumberland in 1919, Tom was not able to go to school, but learnt to read and write with the help of his elder brother. From the age of 11 Tom educated himself with great determination to a very high standard.

He spent a considerable time in various hospitals in the North of England before moving in 1957 to the Cheshire Home at Staunton Harold. In 1967 Tom was able to return to his beloved Northumberland to live at Matfen Hall.

Tom showed exceptional literary prowess, and while at Staunton Harold he wrote revues and scripts for pantomimes. His work in prose and poetry was recognised in many local and national newspapers and magazines.

First prize

In 1979 Tom was awarded first prize in The Spastics Society's Annual Literary Contest. The judges commented on Tom's article "Fifty Years Ago", saying, "This is a piece of autobiography remarkable for its simplicity and evocativeness. Only a very sensitive person could have written it." Tom's

sensitivity secured for him a place in the hearts of those who met him.

As a boy, Tom was a keen Scout and at Matfen Hall he served on various committees and was Chairman of the Residents Committee.

Village life

Outside the Hall, Tom took a great interest in the village, and was a member of the Parochial Church Council and Vice President

of Stamfordham Cricket Club.

His disability did not deter him from travelling, which he did extensively in Europe, as well as visiting his younger brother in South Africa. In 1972 he went on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, a moving experience for him.

Tom's philosophy on life and acceptance of disability was revealed in his poem "in God's Sight", which as a fitting tribute to Tom was read at the funeral service.



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Any Questions for Seb

SEBASTIAN COE was the guest at a fund-raising evening held by the Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and District Group last month.

A large audience gathered at Berkhamsted Girls' School for an Any Questions style event. With Sebastian Coe on the panel of three were Alan Mills, Wimbledon referee, and David Millar, sports correspondent of The Times.

The questions, naturally, were of a sporting nature. Sebastian is seen here with two of his audience, Gavin Rickets (right) and Nick Goss, both cerebral palsy sufferers. Photo: courtesy of Hemel Hempstead Gazette.

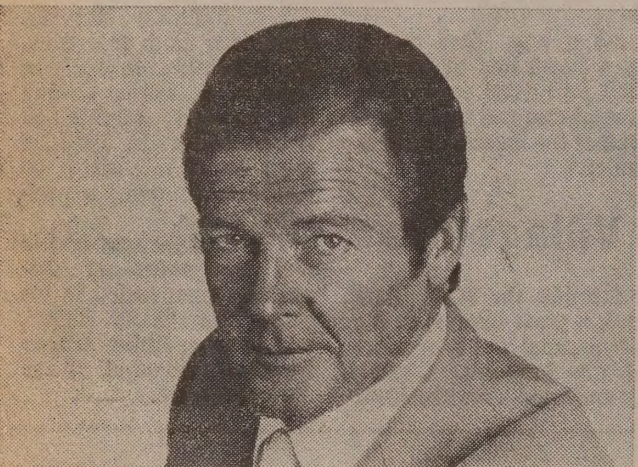


Photo: Baily.

SOS DATE WITH 007 . . .

007, POSSIBLY better known to The Spastics Society as Roger Moore, will be waging his latest fight against the powers of wrong in aid of the Stars Organisation for Spastics.

The new James Bond film, Octopussy, will be premièred on June 6, 1983, in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales.

Proceeds will go to the Stars Organisation for Spastics and the Princess of Wales Charities Trust. The première will be held at the Odeon, Leicester Square.



The Valentine is received at No 11. Photo: Keystone Press.

VAT was the week VAT was . . . When 50 MPs joined in the campaign

VAT week lobbying of MPs by their local constituents was a resounding success for the Charities VAT Reform Group.

Fifty hitherto uncommitted MPs have signed the motion tabled by John Hannam, MP, calling on the Chancellor to include VAT reform in his Budget on March 15.

The Charities VAT Reform Group have been fighting a two-pronged campaign, firstly with their direct appeal for reform to the Chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe, in the hope that he may

include it in his March Budget; and an attempt to gain support in Parliament for the inclusion of reform in the later changes in the resulting Finance Bill.

Amanda Jordan, Parliamentary Lobbyist for The Spastics Society, told **Spastics News**: "All the MPs I've talked to have said that they signed the motion in response to requests from their local constituents." There are now 185 Members of Parliament supporting the Reform Group's campaign, with more signing daily.

An Action Line for Safer Babies

SAVING babies is to be made a little easier for five regional hospitals thanks to grants made available from the Blue Peter Appeal Fund, which was raised through the efforts of thousands of viewers of the popular television programme.

Much of the money raised through the giant Bring and Buy sale campaign was used to provide permanent accommodation for spastic children, which was opened in 1982 by the Blue Peter presenters, Sarah Green, Peter Duncan and Simon Groom.

The remaining money has been allocated to the special care baby units of several hospitals, and to vital neonatal research.

The **West Middlesex Hospital** will receive £10,000, which will purchase some much needed equipment for its Special Care Baby Unit. First on the hospital's shopping list is a Transcutaneous Bilirubin Monitor.

Behind the technical label is an extremely practical and useful device which detects, through a baby's skin, the level of bile pigment in the bloodstream and the presence of jaundice in new babies.

Dr Alex Habel, Consultant Paediatrician at the West Middlesex Hospital

told **Spastics News**: "This will really mean that babies will be under a far less risk of harm from jaundice. They can all now be screened twice a day, without the need for blood tests."

He and his staff will be sleeping a lot easier at nights. Also bought for this hospital is a transport incubator, for the safe movement of babies both inside the hospital or on transfers to other hospitals.

"We had one of the earliest ones," says Dr Habel, "but that has just worn out. This comes really just in the nick of time. I feel at last we have a real action line for these babies."

Dr Bissenden, of the **Dudley Road Hospital, Birmingham**, spoke of the difference that a new transcutaneous oxygen monitor will make to him and his staff.

The monitor gives a constant readout of the level of oxygen in a baby's blood, and enables doctors to tell exactly how much oxygen should be given.

The monitor will be used for 75 to 100 babies per year and will mean says Dr Bissenden, "better quality of babies' lives, hopefully meaning less spasticity and unimpaired intelligence."

It's a major advance in the care of these children. Although the monitor does not make blood tests unnecessary, it does mean that they will be needed far less frequently, saving staff time, and disturbing babies much less."

The **Hope Hospital, Manchester**, will be buying heart rate monitors, heart rate and blood pressure alarms, as well as monitors to measure breathing rates, with the money allocated to its intensive care baby unit.

The care that babies receive here demands a great deal of time and attention from the staff. By providing alarms and constant readouts, the new equipment will mean that a lot of the weight of work will be spread more lightly on the staff.

"They will be extra ears and eyes for us," Dr Robinson told **Spastics News**. "They can't replace staff of course, but they will make life much easier for them. They will also make the babies' lives a great deal easier, so that they get much stronger more quickly."

"I can't tell you how excited we are about this," said Dr Rao, Consultant Paediatrician at the **Royal Liverpool Hospital** and lecturer at **Liverpool University**.

"I simply approached the local Spastics Society Group to see if they had any fundraising ideas, and now we have all the money for our new equipment," she explained.

Together with Professor Beasley at **Liverpool University**, Dr Rao is researching the blood flow between mothers and babies before birth, through the umbilical cord.

With the new ultra sound equipment Dr Rao will be able to tell whether sufficient blood and oxygen is reaching the foetus.

"The results are instant, and we should be able to identify babies at risk immediately and without discomfort to baby or mother. Also, the results of our research will be of benefit to paediatricians and babies all over the country in the near future."

At the time of going to press, these four hospitals are in the process of ordering and purchasing their equipment. We will report in later issues on their installation and use.

Had the Blue Peter Appeal money not been available from The Spastics Society, what would these hospitals have done? In the words of Dr Habel, "I suppose we'd do what we do now, just try and manage without, somehow."

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Opportunity Tots



Left: There's plenty of fun for everyone, mums included.

Above: Everybody loves to splash about and make a mess.

MANY mums have discovered the great asset that a local playgroup can be for them and their toddlers. Not only do the children have the opportunity to meet and mix with other children of their own age, but mums are given a break from routine and a chance to chat with each other, swap ideas and advice and make many new friends.

This has probably never been more true than it is for the group which meets

at the Trinity United Reformed Church Hall in Pendennis Road, Streatham on Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings.

Equal

For some of the children here, the playgroup, known as the Streatham Opportunity Group, is the best chance that they have of starting life on equal terms with the other children around them. Three of

the toddlers in the group are cerebral palsied, three have Down's Syndrome, one has speech delay and epilepsy, and another three have birth marks which will require operations in the future.

Lively

However, these ten lively toddlers more than hold their own with the nine able-bodied brothers and sisters and volunteer helpers' children who make

up the rest of the group.

While the toddlers with handicaps are stimulated and taught to play by their able bodied counterparts, the children without disabilities are growing up unperturbed by and unafraid of the disabilities of their playmates. All the children show an equal inclination towards enjoying water play, sand, noisy rattles and having a thoroughly messy fun time.

The group claims that none of the awkward at-

mosphere of playgroups for handicapped children only exists here, and that children here can play just as their brothers and sisters do.

Trained

The group is run by trained staff, with volunteers, mums, and visits from professional workers. More volunteers are needed. Anyone interested in helping must be able to give two hours help a

week, and should contact Mrs Bruce on 764 6173. The club itself is open to children under the age of five.

Future

Plans for the club's future include a new toy library, and the group have applied for a grant to purchase a minibus to make visits and outings part of the fun.



Young Andrew Pirie has fun exercising with help from mum.

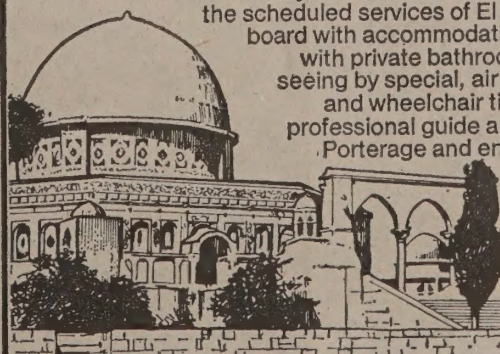
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The day the apple of all their eyes

Society Patron brings work to standstill

PRODUCTIVITY at the Neath Hill Professional Workshop dropped suddenly on March 3, 1983. Work on the centre's Apple computers stopped for the day as staff chatted and left their posts.

It was all in a very good cause, however, as the Patron of The Spastics Society, HRH The Duchess of Kent, was the visitor who brought the work to a halt.

Before unveiling a plaque to commemorate her visit, Her Royal Highness toured the Professional Workshop at length, talking with all the members of staff and hearing about the work of this pioneering unit. Clearly, she was very impressed, as were all her hosts.

"I can assure you that my interest in The Spastics Society will never wane," she said. Certainly there was plenty at the Professional Workshop to capture the imagination.



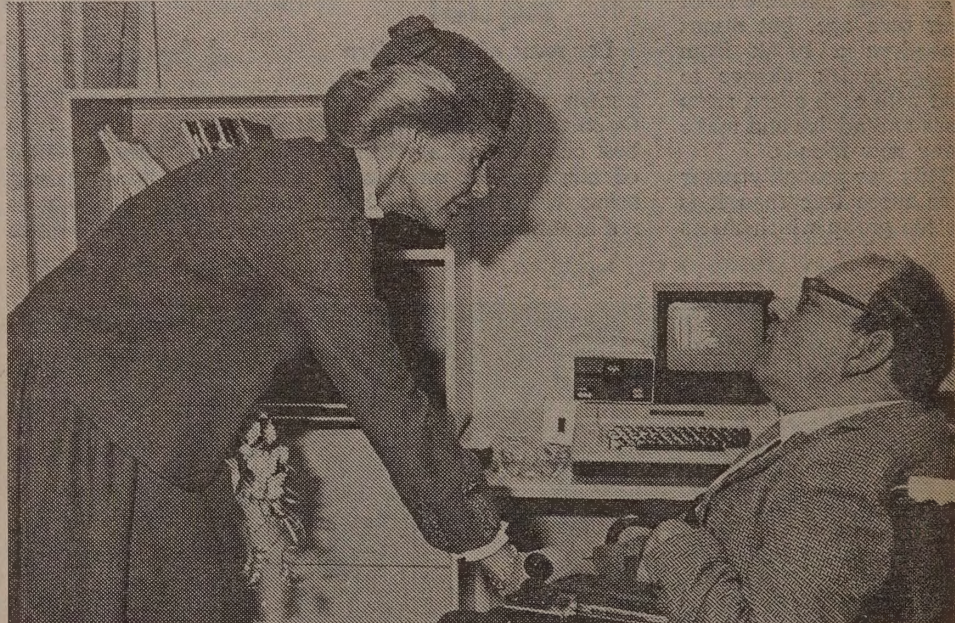
HER Royal Highness chats with Janet Christopher from whom she received a posy, before returning one flower to Janet with advice on how to press and keep it.



"WHERE did you learn your work?" Kathy Emerton, Marketing Administrator, is asked. "Here, very quickly, in the past few months!" she replies.



THE Duchess learns the importance of the Service Department from (L to R) Colin Cox, Partner and Service Administrator, currently studying Digital Electronics with the Open University, John Looker on the staff as Service Engineer, and Anthony Crowhurst, working at the Workshop on the YOP Programme.



GLYNN Vernon is the Senior Partner and Senior Programmer at the Workshop, which also involves a certain amount of teaching. He has been with the project from the beginning and previously worked for Rotherham Borough Council.



OBVIOUSLY this computing business is not all serious. There's always time for a joke or two. Dick has been at the Workshop from the beginning, and is an Honorary Member of the British Computer Society.



BARRY Newbould joined the project recently, moving to Milton Keynes from Sheffield to become a Partner in the Workshop. Using his Apple Visual Display Unit, Barry explained some of his work as Programmer.



MARIA Brooks became a Partner in the Workshop only a few months ago. Also a Programmer, she demonstrates how a page turner is used to select the required data for her work. "It's all quite extraordinary, fascinating," Her Royal Highness declared.

was not a computer

report by Yvette Sanson



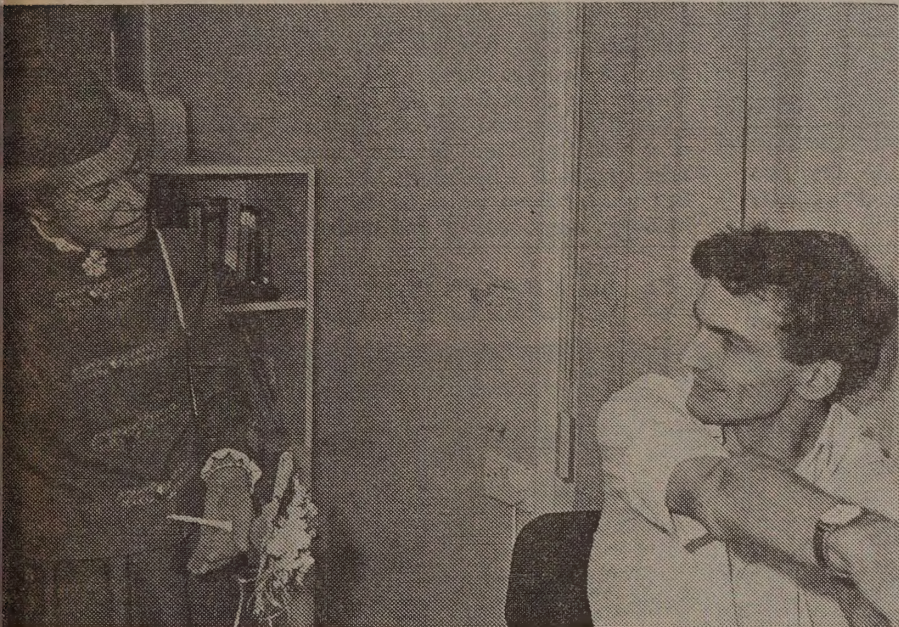
Eppstein, Marketing Assistant and Partner in the shop, explains part of her work. She has been with Workshop since October 1981.



JANET Christopher is a Partner and Business Consultant to the Workshop. She explains that she is currently studying for accountancy exams.



SYSTEMS Analyst Steve Ludlow explains his role to Her Royal Highness. Steve is a Partner and joined in March, 1982, with a BSc degree. "Do you enjoy your work here?" Her Royal Highness asks. "Very much so," says Steve.



DAVID Arnott, Partner and Programmer, is studying for qualifications in computing four days a week at Cranfield Institute of Technology. "Please do let me know what job you eventually get," asks The Duchess, "I would like to know."



DICK Boydell, Partner and Programmer, demonstrated the Apple Voice Synthesiser to his delighted and fascinated audience, including Peter Deakin the Project Co-ordinator and Roger Jefcoate, Consultant to the Professional Workshop.



The Duchess meets Pam Fox, staff member and Head of Administration. Pam was retrained on a TOPS course and studied book-keeping and business before joining the Professional Workshop over 18 months ago.



HER Royal Highness left the Workshop to visit Miss Anne Milnes in her flat in the local housing estate. Anne explained that she was able to live quite independently with the minimum of assistance from daily visitors in cooking and dressing. The Duchess admired Anne's



taste in decor. With Anne were her parents, Mr and Mrs F. L. Milnes. HAD the visit been an enjoyable one for our Royal Patron? As on all other occasions, the camera didn't lie. ALL PHOTOS: JEFF ROSS.

Regional Round-up... Regional Round-up... Regional Round-up...



MAKING no bones about fundraising are two Malvern butcher's shops run by T. W. Ash. The shops offer free dog bones in return for a charitable contribution in a box on the counter. This novel idea has raised hundreds of pounds for their local Society over the years. Photo: Malvern Gazette.



£2,000 towards the £14,000 minibus appeal for Vranth House School and children's treatment centre, Exeter, were raised by subscribers to the national Spastics Pool recently. Mr Ron Harris, on behalf of the Pool's Good Neighbours Trust, presents a cheque for the money to Mrs Marion Guscott, secretary of the Vranth House Executive Committee, and of the Devon and Exeter Spastics Society. Photo: John Sculpher.



DAVID Bourne, North West Appeals Officer, receives a cheque for £900 from the children of Poulton-le-Sands Church of England School, Morecambe, towards the cost of a new ambulance for the Lancaster, Morecambe and District Spastics Society. The appeal target of £14,000 has almost been achieved thanks to the generosity of industry, organisations and individuals in the area.

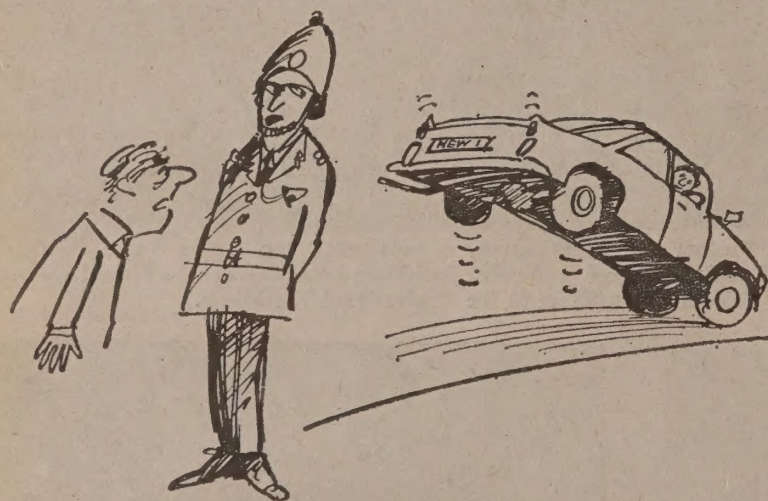
The Key to Success...



Is Helping Others...



THE winners of the Stars Organisation for Spastics Ski Yoghurt competition were the New Ash Green Cub Pack, whose money messages raised £180 in the contest's most original fundraising method. Their prize of a new minibus was presented by SOS Chairman Tim Rice and The Lady Anne Tennant. Photos: Above, Doug McKenzie. Below, Gravesend Reporter.



"He's had this problem ever since he started carrying his Newton Ultra Lightweight wheelchair in the car boot"

We can't claim to defy gravity, but our engineers and craftsmen have produced a strong manoeuvrable wheelchair weighing only 30 lbs which is easier to push. Folded it stows away into most car boots.

Contact us today for further information about the Newton Ultra-Lightweight and the Newton Elan powered wheelchair.

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The Creative Spirit lives

On the shelf

NO Handicap to Dance, by Gina Leveté—Souvenir Press, Human Horizons Series. Paperback, price, £4.95.

DISABILITY, Theatre and Education, by Richard Tomlinson—Souvenir Press, Human Horizons Series. Paperback, price £4.95.

Participating in creative dance, music or drama classes, or aspiring to become a member of a professional theatre company may seem ludicrous suggestions to many people with physical or mental disabilities. Two new titles from Souvenir Press will help to dispell the myth that these activities are exclusively for the able-bodied. They are both stimulating accounts of the power and importance of creative activities in providing enjoyment and emotional outlets for everyone.

In 1981 an exciting new venture in theatre came to fruition with the formation of the Graeae Theatre Company. Graeae is Britain's first full-time professional theatre company of actors with disabilities. Its founder, Richard Tomlinson, was prompted to set up a theatre of disabled people after hearing a graphic, and ironically humorous, account of a crippling accident, from the student to whom it had happened. He was struck by the notion that the most effective medium for recounting that kind of horrifying and dramatic event was the theatre.

Graeae was formed nine years later as the inevitable result of the progression of a group of disabled people working together in drama workshops and classes, developing their

stagecraft to a professional standard.

Disability, Theatre and Education traces that development and describes the working methods used by the company. It also explores the reasons why a theatre of disabled people is necessary and looks at the need for professional tutoring for disabled people in acting, directing and stage management.

Another creative group for disabled people is described in **No Handicap to Dance**.

But Gina Leveté's organisation Shape (see also *Spastics News*, page 11) is quite different in its aims and methods. Shape comprises hundreds of artists with many types of talent who perform and hold workshops with a great variety of people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate in any creative activity.

Shape's artists hold sessions in hospitals, day centres, prisons, or anywhere that they are invited. But it was not so easy in the beginning. When Gina Leveté first approached a hospital to ask for permission to hold classes in creative movement she was asked to justify her proposal and to say what she hoped to achieve. "Fun," she replied. Her account of the methods and effects of her work over the past 12 years is a testimony to the power of creative activities in breaking down barriers between people and their handicaps.

Gina and her co-workers have been able to give many people the chance to do things that they would never have considered within the limits of their environment.

Her book is a story of hard work, dedication and faith in the power of the creative spirit which she believes lives in us all.

Wendy Andrews.

"GETTING through to your handicapped child."

By Newson and Hipgrave. Published by Cambridge University Press, November 1982. Price: £3.95. ISBN 0 521 27056 1.

Practical handbooks, giving parents fairly specific, step-by-step guidance in an easily understandable format are pretty hard to come by, so this little book by Elizabeth Newson and Tony Hipgrave should be a welcome find.

As the title suggests, the overall theme is communication, and it is mainly aimed at parents of mentally-handicapped children, though it may be useful for any child with communications difficulties.

The authors stress that their "behavioural approach" is not designed primarily to control a child's behaviour, but to increase the two-way understanding between a poorly-communicating child and his parents.

The book doesn't provide all the answers, but it does suggest a new way of looking at things, and it gives sufficient practical advice for any parents to begin devising their own teaching programmes.

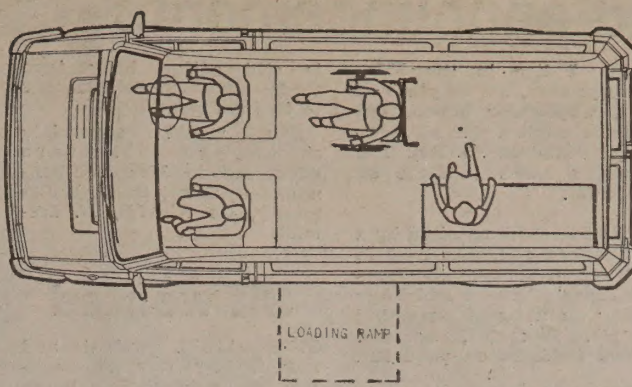
There are nine chapters divided into two parts: the first, discussing the ideas, the second with practical suggestions and examples of their application in real-life situations.

They stress the need to make an accurate record of the child's behaviour, as a base to start from, and the authors provide useful tips on how to go about this, so that even parents with little experience of keeping notes would be able to try.

The book deals with dressing, toileting, feeding, with "play," in some detail, and goes on to the development of "language" (as a wider concept than just speech).

The tenth chapter is different from the rest, and

MOTORING



● THE Talbot Express — basic passenger layout.

discusses the emotions that handicapped children arouse in adults — both parents and professionals.

Although there is nothing very new here, it is sensitively written and parents who have not come across other such material may find it helpful.

Simply and clearly written, so as to be easily understood by any parent, it occasionally lapses into a patronising tone that some may find offensive (particularly the little quiz, designed to test the reader's understanding of the first six chapters).

This one criticism, however, should not deter anyone from reading this otherwise excellent book, whose straightforward language and practical suggestions make it one of the better of its kind.

Sue Kendall.

COPIES of *No Handicap to Dance*; *Disability, Theatre and Education*; *Getting through to your handicapped child*; and *Charity, Law and Social Justice*, are kept in the library at Park Crescent, which is open to all our readers.

Next month we review "Positions for Play" by The Toy Libraries Association and "Living Independently" by Ann Shearer.

by John Byworth

a roof height on the standard van of 1.52m which is more than adequate for most purposes. If you need to stand upright a lot, however, a high roof model is available. The side door is wide enough to make loading a wheelchair easy, and the low floor height makes the use of a plain ramp possible.

Comfortable

The driving position has been well designed with a fairly flat steering wheel and comfortable moulded seat. The controls and instruments are well positioned, although I found the gearstick a little too far away for 1st and 2nd. On the road, I found this van light and easy to handle and even when manoeuvring into a small parking space, the steering wheel and soft clutch made a difficult task simple.

As a commercial vehicle, the large bonnet and engine compartment has been designed to give easy access to all parts of the engine and servicing should be possible by the average DIY motorist. The diesel engine version could be considered for its economy but it does require expert servicing approximately every 3,000 miles. Fifth gear is also an optional extra.

TECHNICAL DETAILS: Petrol engine 1796cc. Front wheel drive through 4-speed gearbox.

Fuel Consumption: 37 mph-34 mpg, 56 mph-25 mpg. COST: Basic van with windows and side loading door, £4,375 plus Car Tax plus VAT. With diesel engine fitted approx £800 extra.

Option 1. Forward facing seats on N/S which convert into bed plus wheelchair clamps, £950.

Option 2. As 1, with additional toilet compartment, £1,100.

Option 3. As 1 and 2, with additional sink and hob unit, £1,225.

More details available from Mr M. Lyne, Lyne, Frank & Wagstaff Ltd, London Road, Enfield, Middlesex. Tel: 01-367 3000.

Privacy

It is in this area that the caravanette has come into its own, providing suitable space for a wheelchair but also having the additional advantage of feeding or dealing with incontinence in complete privacy.

The launch of an all new panel van must, therefore, be of interest, so I went along to look at the "Talbot Express" with a view to its family use as a caravanette / wheelchair transporter.

Standard

Introduced to replace the aging Commer van, it is in appearance similar to almost all other vans in this class. The model I chose for investigation was the standard van with windows and side loading door, which can be adapted to suit the individual user.

Inside, the load area is flat and uncluttered with

Are we losing our right to speak?

THE freedom of speech of British charities has been so severely curtailed by the courts and the Charity Commission that if the Anti-Slavery Society wished to be registered as a charity in 1982 it would be rejected as too political.

This is the claim of a new book, "Charity, Law and Social Justice,"* just published.

The author, Francis Gladstone, head of policy planning at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), also predicts that if the churches continue to develop their increasingly radical concern for social justice, "they would seem to be on course for a major collision with English charity law."

Founded in 1839, the Anti-Slavery Society has long been a registered charity, and is still active fighting slavery in several

parts of the world. But, says Gladstone, "today, no new organisation devoted to such ends could be registered as a charity. Opposing even the gravest of social injustices — slavery, even genocide — is no longer charitable in the eyes of the law."

The book traces the steps by which the scope of charitable work has been restricted, and the freedom of speech of charities "gradually whittled away" during the 20th century.

political

In 1917, the courts denied charitable status to any organisation whose primary objectives were political. In 1969, the Charity Commission issued new guidelines curtailing the right of charities to use political lobbying in pursuit of their objectives. And in its latest annual report — for 1981 — the Commission has reduced the scope for "political" activity even further.

The book suggests that these increasing restrictions

have led to double standards — one applied to existing charities, the other to would-be charities. The Charity Commission, says Gladstone "turns a blind eye to the fact that its guidelines are constantly breached" by existing charities. But many new organisations "which probably would not encounter any problems with the law if they were registered charities, have been excluded."

In theory, says the author, applicants who are refused charitable status by the Charity Commission can appeal to the High Court and beyond. The courts might be more flexible — but nobody knows, because appeals are very rare.

legal aid

"Few voluntary organisations," explains Gladstone, "even if they can afford to pay the thousands of pounds necessary to go to court, are willing to divert funds from more immediate tasks. The need

for some form of legal aid is one issue where all parties — the Charity Commissioners, charities, lawyers — are all agreed. Without such cases the law cannot readily adjust to changing circumstances."

reform

The book, published to encourage discussion as part of a new campaign for the reform of charity law, says that there is widespread support for a relaxation of the modern restrictions on traditional charitable activities, and also for a widening of charity law to cover contemporary concerns such as the promotion of racial harmony, human rights and world peace.

But it warns that charities could suffer further restrictions "unless the substantial freedom that remains is more vigorously defended than it has been up to now."

*"Charity, Law and Social Justice" by Francis Gladstone (Bedford Square Press of NCVO, £4.95).

Your Legacy

The Spastics Society provides a wide variety of care, education and welfare services.

Your legacy can enable us to give spastic people a greater chance in life.

Information concerning legacies in favour of the Society is available from Bernard Sharpe, Legacies Dept. The Spastics Society 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

Telephone 01-636 5020 Ext. 127

THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

Just what you're looking for — Your ads and announcements

For sale

MEYRA Rehab Electric Wheelchair for sale, Model 422 with reinforced motor, right-hand drive, suitable for small adult. Five years old, little used. Batteries need renewing, otherwise in perfect condition. Complete with battery charger, etc. £400.

Contact Mrs A. M. Bardelang, 133 Foxcroft Drive, Rastrick, Brighouse, HD6 3UX or tel: (0484) 718864.

MINI SUPA BIKE — padded trunk support, padded crossbar. Bought as Christmas present but found not suitable. Never used. Cost £239, will accept £190 ono. — Contact Bevan, 23 Valley Avenue, South Elmsall, Pontefract, West Yorkshire. Tel: South Elmsall 44350.

FOR SALE — all the following are in excellent condition, have been used for 18 months or less, and are offered at half the original purchase price.

Sleyside Selecta Indoor Battery-driven Wheelchair with Charger £300 was £610.

Mecanoid Standard Auto-lift complete with base plate, standard chain and fittings (bath hoist) £125 was £250.

Mecanoid Mecallift with handle and U Chassis, with back and thigh slings £108 was £216.

Terry Personal Lift — Wheelchair model including attendant winch £500 was £1130.

Contact Mrs M. J. Counsell, 50 Regent Drive, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs, PR2 3JB.

Penfriends

I WISH to get in touch with individuals (pen friend?) or group with view to friend-

ship. I live in the Manchester area, am 45 years of age, wheelchair bound, but I drive a trike. Can anybody help? Replies to Box 108, Spastics News (address on page 12).

PENFRIEND required by a 33-year-old girl, who lives in a home in Surrey, who loves all kinds of music and loves going out and meeting people. Box 107, Spastics News (address on page 12).

CHRISTIAN SCHOL is 17 years old and suffers slightly from cerebral palsy. Although his father, who is a lawyer, lives in Belgium and works for the European Council in Brussels, Christian lives and attends school at Aachen in West Germany.

He speaks English and would very much like to stay as a paying guest with an English family for two weeks either at Easter or during the summer. As his handicap is minimal, he is entirely independent.

Any family willing to receive Christian should contact Mrs Anita Loring at The International Cerebral Palsy Society, 5a Netherhall Gardens, London NW3 5RN. Tel: 01-794 9761.

JOAN SHANNON is the mother of four children, the youngest of which is severely handicapped with spastic diplegia. Elizabeth is two years old and has quite a bad scoliosis, optic atrophy (she can discern light and dark) and a slight hearing impairment.

Her spasticity is worse on her right side. Joan would like to hear from anyone who has had anything to do with the upbringing or education of a child with a similar combination of handicaps.

Elizabeth is fascinated by music or unusual noises, but has made little progress towards speech. As yet she

is still eating baby type foods, but Joan believes her to be intelligent.

She would appreciate encouraging letters addressed to Mrs J. Shannon, 41a Newal Road, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, N. Ireland.

Sit wanted

GEOGRAPHY graduate and mother of four small children seeks work at home as a proof reader/editorial assistant part-time. Past experience includes one year with the Solicitor's Journal in London.

Has an uncanny knack of spotting spelling and printing errors.

All offers considered, preferably lucrative.

Contact Mrs J. Shannon, 41a Newal Road, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, N. Ireland.

Courses

THE HULL group, Active, are holding a one day conference, exhibition and day course on Designing for the Handicapped Child, on Saturday, May 7.

The course, which is open to parents and to all professions, will cover the design of special aids and equipment for the disabled child from simple toys to micro technology.

Further details from Mrs R. Ehlert, Occupational Therapist, Frederick Holmes School, Inglemire Lane, Hull.

Holidays

HERTFORDSHIRE Spastics Society have available for hire a 43ft Mobile Holiday Home at West Sands Leisure Centre, Selsey. It sleeps six, and has easy access for wheelchair users. Facilities on site include

swimming pool, discos, bars, shops, laundrettes, etc. Prices range from £40 per week to £50 per week.

Full details and booking forms from Mrs Margaret Green, 10 Fearnley Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6HW. Tel: Welwyn Garden 26468.

If your son or daughter is in need of a holiday, or more likely, if you need a break, St Joseph's holiday home in Hastings, run by the Fellowship of St Nicholas, would be happy to look after him or her for a week or two and give you a chance of recharging your batteries while we look after him for you.

If your child is mentally or physically handicapped, we have a small family which he or she can join and where a very close and happy family atmosphere exists.

Give us a ring, or write for our brochure and details about this opportunity.

Remember — book early!

Apply to The Secretary, The Fellowship of St Nicholas, 25 Stockleigh Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 0JP. Tel (0424) 423683.

SPASTIC PEOPLE, their relatives, helpers and local volunteer groups can place free advertisements in this column. If you have something to sell or swap, a holiday home to let, if you are seeking equipment or employment, or simply wish to make new contacts, this is the column for you. Send your small ads to the Editor at Spastics News.

What's on

ON March 24 and 25 Northamptonshire Social Services and the Northamptonshire Council for the Disabled, are staging MATH '83, a large conference/exhibition concerning microchip technology and its practical application to the handicapped. This kind of venture has never before been held in this country.

The conference has places for 400 delegates, invited from health authorities, social services departments and education authorities in Great Britain, together with all the major organisations associated with the disabled, and 40 major equipment manufacturers.

Special interest workshops are a feature of the conference, giving delegates opportunities to meet with experts in specific topics, and see particular equipment demonstrated.

Further details are available from Gordon F. Pursey, Conference Organiser, MATH '83, 9 Guildhall Road, Northampton. Tel Northampton 34833 Ext 5633.

Snowdon Awards

THE Earl of Snowdon, together with Action Research for the Crippled Child are presenting this year the Snowdon Awards for Physically Handicapped Students 1983.

They consist of bursaries to afford physically disabled young people an opportunity for further education or training. Each bursary is for a period of one or two years and they do not normally exceed £1,444 a year in value. Last year 16 awards were made.

Candidates

Candidates must be at least 17 years old, and preferably less than 25 years old, although older candidates may be considered under special circumstances. He or she must be able to demonstrate that financial circumstances have prevented him from taking advantage of an offer of further education or training which has already been offered to him.

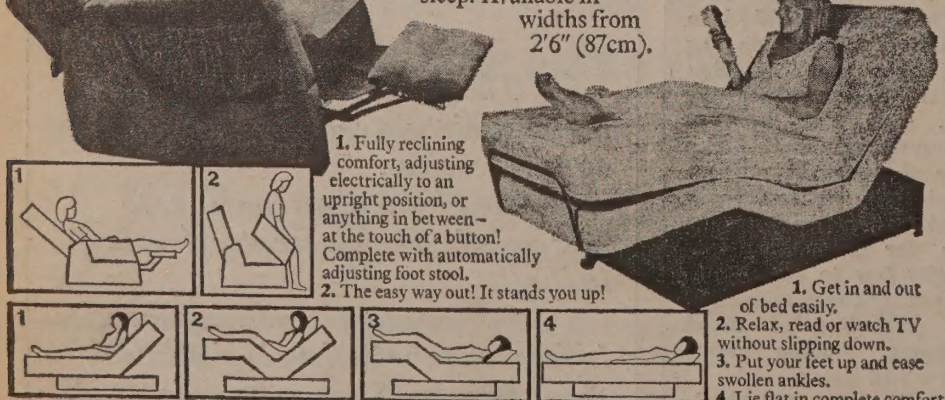
The closing date for applications is May 31, 1983. Application forms and further information are available from the Secretary of the Snowdon Award Scheme, Action Research for the Crippled Child, Vincent House, North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2AD. Tel: Horsham (0403) 64101.

Introducing the chair and bed which will do so much for you.

Comfort you didn't think you could ever enjoy!

The Breen Stand-U-Up/Recliner Chair The Breen Chair, attractively upholstered in a range of colours to complement any home, is more than just a good-looking piece of furniture. A hand control operates an electrically powered mechanism which adjusts the chair to a variety of positions—from fully reclining to upright. The chair seat raises and lowers to assist you to stand up and sit down.

The Electric Adjustable Bed At last, a bed which adjusts, at the touch of a button, to give you a better night's sleep. The Electric Adjustable Bed will sit you up, lie you flat, raise your head, raise your feet—the only movement you make is to put your finger on the button. The degree of adjustment is up to you—in any position the bed will provide correct support for your body, ensuring complete relaxation and a healthy night's sleep. Available in widths from 2'6" (87cm).



Luxury comfort and ease
at the touch of a button
**The Electric Adjustable
Bed Company Ltd**

Visit our showrooms at:
166-168 High Street, Sheerness, Kent.
As advertised on TV

For a brochure, please send this coupon to:
The Electric Adjustable Bed Company Ltd
I am interested in ☐ The Chair ☐ The Bed (please tick)

Name _____
Address _____
Tel _____ SN3

St Malo or bust for Sailing Trust

If you are the sort of person who gets sea-sick just watching The Onedin Line, then read no further; if on the other hand you yearn to stand at the helm of the Soren Larson and take over second watch at eight bells, then The Jubilee Sailing Trust could make your dreams come true this summer.

James Onedin's world famous flagship, the 110 feet Brigantine Soren Larson will be sailing on a number of cruises during

1983, which are open to all would-be sailors from 14 to 60 years old, disabled or not, and with or without nautical knowledge.

Blind, deaf and otherwise physically disabled people, in or out of wheelchairs, are all welcome to serve as crew alongside an equal number of able bodied men and women on each voyage.

The Soren Larson will be operating out of Southampton from mid-July to

October. Prices range from £10 per day for two day cruises to £210 for a full 15 day cruise which covers the Tall Ships Race from Weymouth to St Malo. Food is extra on these prices.

Further information and booking details are available from The Jubilee Sailing Trust, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HX. Telephone 01-380 0160 for an application form.

A holiday home from home

MOST of us need a break from time to time, perhaps to do something wild and exotic and experience the thrill of a lifetime, or maybe just to have a change from routine. If you'd really rather not dance on the tabletops in a thousand Spanish night-clubs, but would love a holiday in a real home from home, why not try one of The Spastics Society's own holiday homes.

The Society's Bedfont Hotel in Clacton, and Garwood Hotel, Bognor Regis, offer holidays for disabled people, who can be unaccompanied if they wish to spend a holiday alone. Trained staff can deal with all personal needs. Rates for the coming year range from £56 per person per week to £168 per per-

son per week, according to season. Guests at the Garwood Hotel only must be at least 14 years old. The Chiltern House Family Help Unit, which provides respite holiday care for often severely handicapped children between the ages of two and 16, is open all year round, and has just announced its new rate of £168 per person per week. There is also a supplementary charge for some individual services.

For families with disabled children wishing to take a holiday all together, Lourdes House in Thanet is ideal. Accommodation is available up to a maximum of 17 people, and the house, which is run by an experienced housemother, overlooks the sea and has easy access to nearby sandy beaches. Between

October and April short term care is also available.

For details of these holiday homes contact the appropriate manager or manageress:

The Bedfont Hotel, Manager Mrs J. P. R. Molyneux, Marine Parade West, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Tel Clacton (0255) 25230.

The Garwood Hotel, Manager Mr O. J. Simmons, 8 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, Sussex. Tel Bognor (02433) 20535.

Chiltern House Family Help Unit, Matron Mrs A. E. Hilary, Hill Top Road, Oxford OX4 1PH. Tel Oxford (0865) 46641.

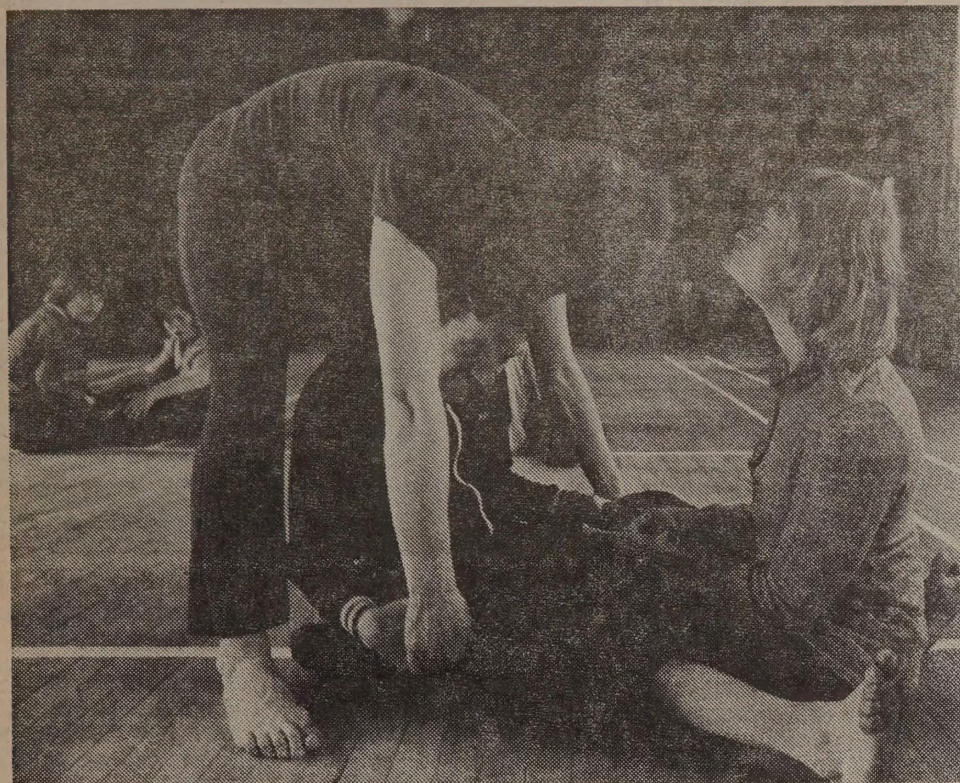
Lourdes House, Resident Housemother Mrs Jean Anderton, 22 Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate, Kent CT9 5DX. Tel Thanet (0843) 291533.

Taking Shape Creatively

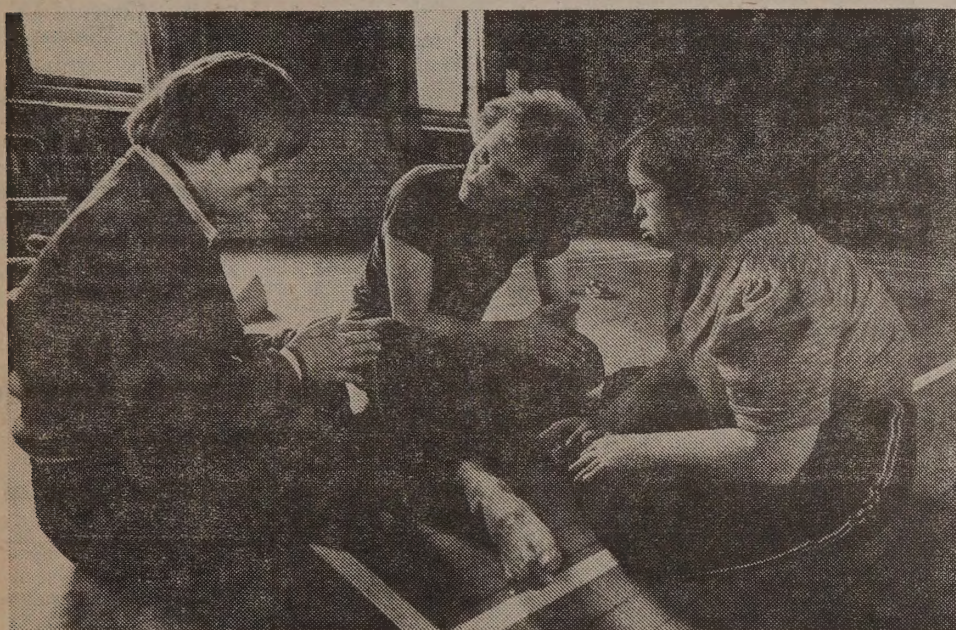
by Wendy Andrews

SHAPE is the pioneering arts organisation which gives creative workshops to people with special needs. Artists on its register provide over 130 regular sessions in London and the home counties and there are nine regional branches of Shape

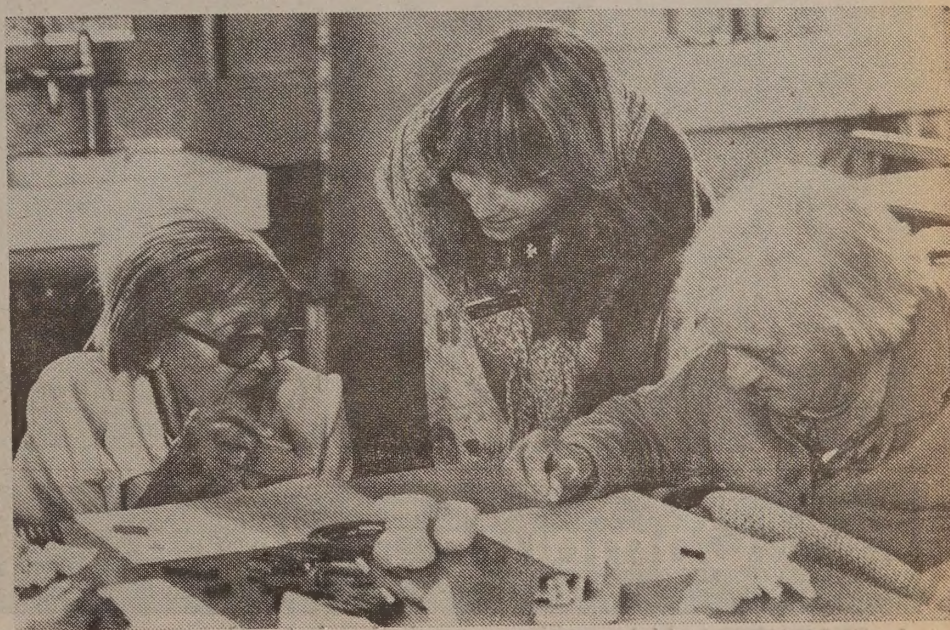
across the country. Creative activities available are many and varied and include mime, dance, music, drama and art. Shape is based at 9 Fitzroy Square, London, W1P 6AE, Tel 01-388 9622. See also book reviews page 9.



Vietnamese children enjoy a performance of music and dance by members of Shape (photo by Chris Schwarz).

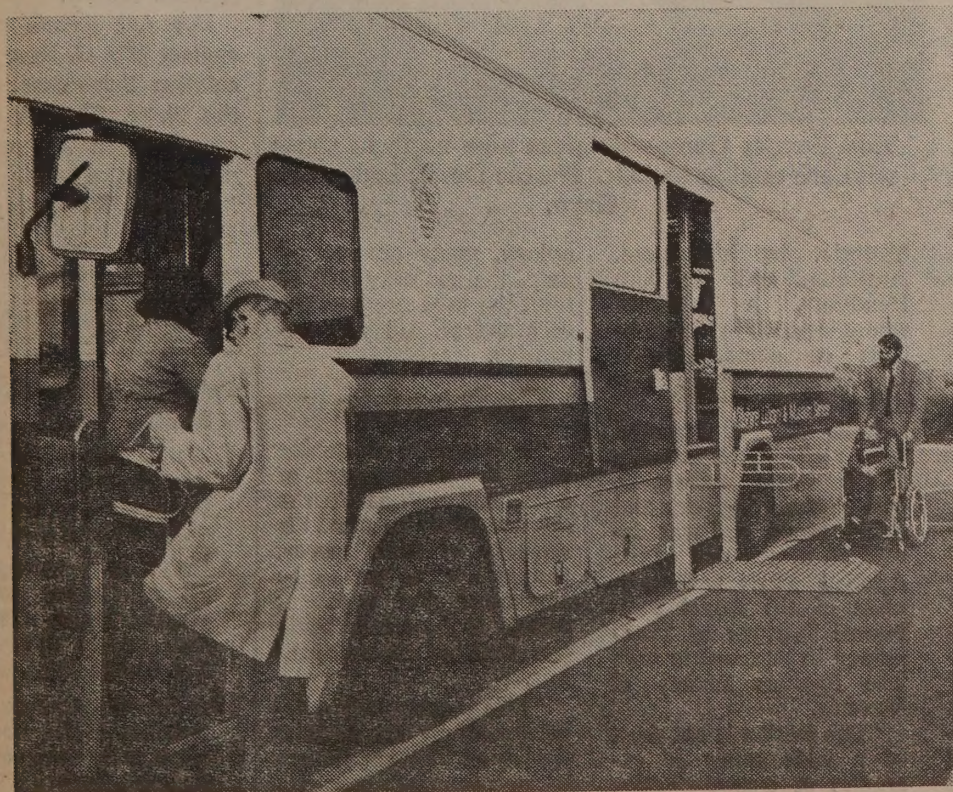


Above and top: Wolfgang Stange leads a dance workshop for mentally handicapped residents at a hospital in Middlesex (Photos by Chris Schwarz).



Teresa Witz leads an art session with geriatric patients (photo by Chris Schwarz).

Literary Progress — the library with wheels within wheels



Wiltshire County Council's new mobile library — a 33ft long vehicle on a 192in wheelbase Ford coach chassis — incorporates a Ratcliff welfare lift on the nearside to provide simple access for all handicapped people to the 3,250 books in the library.

WILTSHIRE County Council have put into service a new Mobile Library serving the Swindon area, built by Bailey's Body Builders Ltd, of Biddulph, Staffordshire, and designed to provide easy access for the handicapped.

The 33ft long vehicle incorporates a Ratcliff welfare lift on the nearside, operated by simple push-button controls.

The library is used in various sites around Swindon from Monday to Thursday, while on Friday it is used solely to visit several old people's homes in the area.

Using the lift, which is operated by the duty librarians, virtually everybody has simple access to the library, which stocks some 3,250 books on Mobilshelves also designed by Bailey's.

Whether using a wheelchair, walking frame or crutches, anyone who has trouble with stairs can use the library with ease.

The Ratcliff lift, incor-

porating safety rails for standing passengers, folds neatly away inside the vehicle, and can be opened out ready for use in a matter of seconds, providing safe and comfortable entry into the library.

The library is currently used by nearly 2,500 residents of the Swindon area on a regular basis, and although only a small proportion of these make use of the lift, Wiltshire's Library Service is convinced that the extra cost of installing the lift has been more than worthwhile by the extra freedom and joy it gives to the

handicapped in being able to browse among the books themselves, in some cases the first time that this has been possible for years.

WHEELCHAIRS Ashley Mobility

Sole Distributors for Vessa Ltd's range of Power and Hand-Propelled Wheelchairs in the Midlands, Powys, Avon and Somerset. Also Everest & Jennings Distributors and BEC & Batricar Agents. All these makes are available on 'Motability' HP, to recipients of the Mobility Allowance. Write for details and colour brochures.

FREEPOST, Birmingham B25 8BR. Tel 021 772 5364 or Ashley Mobility (Worcester) FREEPOST, Worcester WR4 9BR. Tel 08575 or Ashley Mobility, FREEPOST, Weston super Mare, Avon BS23 3BR. Tel 26011.

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Inside Information

EACH year The Spastics Society produces a wide variety of printed material to provide information, publicise and support campaigns and promote the Society's services.

Our current range of leaflets and booklets include the updated Brief Guide, a series of 10 leaflets for parents of spastic children and the 1983 course programmes for Castle Priory Staff Training College and Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre.

The new Handbook to the Society will be available shortly. Other leaflets give information on our various schools and centres.

The Society's Save a Baby campaign which

began in 1978 to try and reduce the risks of perinatal mortality and handicap has inevitably given birth to a large quantity of printed information.

There is a comprehensive factsheet about the campaign, a full-colour pregnancy wall-chart, a pamphlet reviewing the dangers of smoking during pregnancy and an advice and information booklet based on the BBC That's Life Having a Baby survey which was prepared with help from The Society.

Leaflets

Several other useful leaflets about handicap prevention are available including a poster

explaining the danger of German measles to pregnant women.

Our Publicity and Information department has a colourful selection of fundraising and information posters of different sizes and also blank posters for announcements which simply have The Spastics Society's name printed in red.

Nearly 2,000 books and pamphlets are available for loan to the public from our library at Park Crescent.

They cover education and health, handicap, welfare and social work, occupations and activities, psychology and sociology, behaviour and development, and domestic

problems, as well works of fiction and poetry.

The librarian also has a range of books and pamphlets on sale which are aimed at parents and therapists, and a price list is available on request.

Recent additions to the library include publications on maternity care, disability in adolescence, gardening, dancing and the Good Toy Guide 1983.

Films and Videos

The Society has 20 films and videos available on free loan, with the exception of one, from our lending libraries Concord and Viscom.

They show the work of the Society in some of its schools and centres and explain the nature of cerebral palsy and its treatment.

A number of the films were made to support the Save a Baby campaign and the latest of these, A Question of Confidence, was produced last June.

The film shows

GILL Parker (left) provides much valuable research information for the VAT Reform and other campaigns. **Carmen Rebello** is secretary to the Head of Information and Publicity. Photo: Nigel Tuckett.



HELEN Gray, the Society's Librarian, also manages the Bookshop selling booklets and pamphlets. Photo: Nigel Tuckett.

examples of good practice in antenatal care and it has been very well received by the medical profession, and particularly by midwives.

Another recent film entitled Where Do I Go From Here is currently showing at cinemas around the country as a support to the main picture.

It discusses the problem of unemployment among disabled young people and looks at the benefits of the work done by Sherrards Training Centre, which is run by the Society at Welwyn Garden City.

For further informa-

tion about the films and for a free film list, contact the Publicity and Film Officer at Park Crescent. To borrow or buy films or videos contact Concord (0473) 76012 or Viscom (01) 761 3035.

All the printed and audio-visual material we produce is for use by the public and we welcome written and telephone inquiries or personal visits to the Publicity and Information Department.

Report by Wendy Andrews

Publicity Officer and Film Librarian

Compute a Voice

A COMPUTER which can talk can be a blessing to a person who cannot.

Vocriss, a computer with a voice of its own, developed specially for people

with no speech, has just been demonstrated at the headquarters of The Spastics Society in London.

Developed in Australia Vocriss holds out promise of being more adaptable to individual needs and

cheaper than any other speech aid currently available.

Vocriss adapts to the needs of the user rather than require the user to adapt to it.

The 350 words or phrases which the micro-computer based artificial voice can store and use can be chosen to suit the needs of the user.

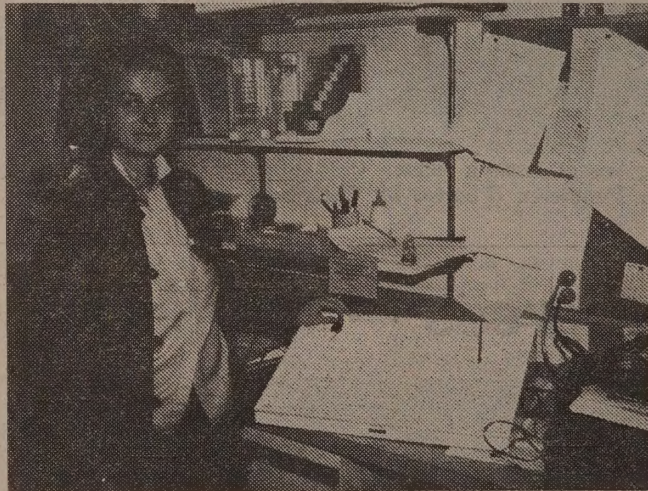
Users with slight to moderate manual disability can use a light sensitive wand, manipulated by hand or headpointer to select words or phrases while the more severely disabled can find new voice using a scanning access method operated by a single switch or by blowing and sucking.

Symbolic

The user doesn't even have to be able to read to use the aid as pictures symbols and photos or any symbolic device can be used to activate the voice.

The functional layout of the top surface depends upon the individual requirements of the user and can be quickly changed whenever necessary.

Vocriss is the brainchild of Miss Andrea Goldsmith, Chief Speech Pathologist with the Spastics Society of



THE Vocriss Computer gives new hope to those who are unable to talk. Photo: Derek Lancaster-Gaye.

Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia, and Dr Tim Hendtlass, a physicist whose interests in the problems of communication was aroused by the Victoria Society.

It is rugged, powered from rechargeable batteries usable while recharging, devoid of moving parts and splash proof, and was developed by the staff of the Applied Physics Department of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in partnership with The Spastics Society of Victoria.

"The market is not short of a wide range of examples of communication devices," says Mr Derek Lancaster-Gaye, Deputy Director of The Spastics Society. "These thrive on a rapidly developing tech-

nology, many are out of date, the majority fail to meet the total needs of the user and all are very expensive.

Refreshing

"It is always refreshing when the development of a new aid such as Vocriss appears likely to meet the majority of users' needs, and at a price yet to be announced but which is certain to be substantially less than all its competitors.

"This is essentially a development by the Spastics Society of Victoria, though initial reaction suggests that the Society might well wish to become involved with the use of this equipment in the United Kingdom.

Your own copy

IF you are not already a regular subscriber to Spastics News, but would like to receive it regularly, you can order your own personal copy direct from The Spastics Society.

For full details please contact Mrs G. Rose, Circulation Supervisor, Spastics News, 12 Park Crescent, London W1, or telephone on 01-636 5020, Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

SPASTICS NEWS

Published by The Spastics Society.

Editorial office: The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

Advertising representative: H. A. Collins Ltd, 37 Ruskin Road, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 3BQ. Tel 01-647 1393.

The views expressed in Spastics News are not necessarily those of The Spastics Society.

Printed by F. J. Parsons, Observer Buildings, Cambridge Road, Hastings, Sussex.

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